

Appl. No. 10/762,165
Amdt. dated July 17, 2006
Reply to Office action of April 20, 2006

Amendment to the Drawings:

Please replace Sheet 4/4 with Replacement Sheet 4/4, attached herewith as an Appendix.

Figure 8 has been amended, pursuant to the Examiner's request. Former reference numeral 41 has been correctly renumbered to reference numeral 44. No new matter has been added.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action dated April 20, 2006, the Examiner objected to the drawings because reference numeral 44 of Figure 7 and reference numeral 41 of Figure 8 both appeared to identify the same feature; namely, the sphere retainer. Applicant has corrected Figure 8 to replace reference numeral 41 with reference numeral 44. A Replacement Sheet is submitted as an Appendix to this Response with Figure 8 properly numbered. No new matter has been added. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is requested.

Due to the objection to the drawings in the Action, and Applicant's subsequent correction to the drawings, Applicant has amended the specification to place it conformity with the corrected drawings. Specifically, Applicant has amended the specification to properly indicate the "sphere retainer" and its accompanying reference numeral 44. No new matter has been added.

The Action rejected claims 1 – 7 and 9 – 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2d paragraph. Specifically, the claims referred to both a "sphere retainer" and a "sphere-shaped retaining insert." Applicant has amended claims 1, 2, 9, 14, 25, and 29 to distinctly claim a "sphere retainer." Additionally, Applicant has amended claims 1, 2, 9, 25, and 29 to more properly describe features of the "sphere retainer." Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

The Action rejected claims 25 – 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2d paragraph, stating that claims 25 – 32 recite a “sphere-shaped retaining insert centrally disposed within the O-ring structure and *connected below the lower surface of each strut.*” (emphasis in original). Specifically, the Action alleges that the claims fail to identify the feature to which the sphere-shaped retaining insert is connected. Applicant has amended claim 25 to state, “a sphere retainer centrally disposed within the O-ring structure and connected to each of said struts, so that a portion of said sphere retainer extends below the lower surface of each strut.” Thus, Applicant has amended claim 25 to indicate that the sphere retainer is connected to each of the struts in a particular arrangement. Claims 26 – 32 are dependant from claim 25. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Early notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

The Assistant Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any excess payment that may be associated with this communication to deposit account 04-1679.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: July 17, 2006

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